

Ready For Anything

QUEENSTOWN LAKES COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GROUP NETWORK

Quarterly Update



Ready for Anything - quarterly update April 2026

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Kia ora CRGs,

We hope you found our recent *Powered for Anything* special edition useful.

It's been great to see a bit more sunshine lately. While it may not have felt like much of a summer here, we really feel for other parts of the country that have been battling a near-constant cycle of severe weather events and states of emergency. Communities, councils, Civil Defence groups, and critical workers have been on a rollercoaster of preparation, response, and recovery.

Alongside this, we're also seeing increasing pressure from factors beyond our control, including fuel supply concerns, global disruptions, and geopolitical tensions. These challenges can have real impacts locally, reminding us that emergencies don't happen in isolation. It's often not just about preparing for one scenario, but for multiple overlapping pressures at once. This highlights just how critical the work you're doing to prepare and support your communities is.

There's plenty happening across our district — read on to find out what's been going on. As always, thanks for sharing your views and learnings with us!

Events and training

Over and out

Thanks to everyone who participated in the district-wide CRG radio exercise on 5 March. There were plenty of learnings but it was great to see how well the network performed - what worked and what we need to work on! The next phases are about strengthening the physical radio connections between neighbouring groups so that if a repeater's not working, groups can still communicate with their neighbours and daisy-chain messages to the EOC.



Photo: Southern Corridor CRG team, left to right: Robert Osmetti, Steve Murch, Ruth Joiner, Tim Cook

Upper Clutha accommodation sector workshop

After delivering workshops to Queenstown's commercial accommodation sector late last year, QLDC, Emergency Management Otago and Lake Wānaka Tourism hosted a workshop for the Upper Clutha sector in Wānaka. The aim was to support the district's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) with a coordinated approach to visitor welfare.

The workshop focused on likely impacts of a major event, such as an AF8 earthquake, the critical manaakitanga role accommodation providers play in caring for visitors, and practical ways to strengthen business continuity plans including backup power, communications, and emergency supplies. Key messages for providers were:

- **Shelter guests in place** if it's safe to do so, look after them, and keep them informed.
- **Liaise with LWT about capacity and needs** so this information can be passed to the district EOC.
- **Follow official instructions** on when and how people can leave the area to avoid unsafe or unmanaged movement. This includes **keeping roads clear for emergency services**, and **not going to the airport until advised** as operations will be suspended while comprehensive safety inspections and works are carried out.

Over 500 kids getting Clued Up on safety across Central Otago

During April and May, more than 500 Year 6 students from across Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago will be getting clued up on how to prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

Run by EMO's local advisors in partnership with emergency services and community organisations who volunteer their time, the annual Clued Up Kids programme teaches 10-11 year-olds practical, lifesaving skills they can use at school, at home, and throughout life – everything from fire safety and emergency planning to water smarts, pet care, hygiene, and mental wellbeing. It's fun, interactive and the kids always go home buzzing and keen to share what they've learned with their families and schoolmates. This has the desired ripple effect of raising awareness and encouraging more emergency preparedness across their communities!



Getting Good and Ready

Supported by QLDC Welcoming Communities, the NZ Red Cross is hosting another Good and Ready emergency preparedness workshop on 12 May, 6-7:30pm, at Queenstown Events Centre meeting room. Light refreshments available. The session is open to all but has a focus on supporting migrant communities less familiar with local hazards and emergency systems. Register your attendance at southern.area@redcross.org.nz.

District-wide annual emergency exercise

EMO and QLDC staff will be running their annual emergency exercise on 20 May, and there's a great opportunity for CRGs to get involved - Emergency Management Advisors will get in touch with you soon.

Fun fact - "No duff"! Emergency exercises are a useful way of practicing our responses. But when a situation turns real, it's declared "no duff" — meaning it's not a drill anymore and everyone needs to respond for real!

CRG news

- **Kitted out** - The Wānaka CRG has secured its own Emergency Trailer, allowing it to bring essential equipment to all areas of its community and respond more effectively in an emergency. The trailer had its first outing at the Wānaka CRG Emergency Preparedness Expo.
- **Sirens, safety and smiles at Wānaka Expo** - Emergency vehicles, hands-on activities and practical advice drew Wānaka locals to Mitre 10 MEGA on 28 February for the Wānaka CRG's Emergency Preparedness Expo.



The lively community event brought together emergency services, Civil Defence teams and local organisations to share tips on how households can be ready when disasters strike. Attendees explored fire engines and response vehicles, chatted with first responders and picked up ideas for building emergency kits and making household plans. They also learned more about the natural hazards that can affect the Upper Clutha – from earthquakes and floods to landslides, wildfires and severe weather. With plenty to see and do, the expo made emergency preparedness approachable and practical, reminding residents that a few simple steps today can make a big difference when it matters most.



If you're keen to connect with the Wānaka CRG to find out more about the expo or its new trailer, please email wanakacrg@gmail.com.

- **Colourful chats** – The [Southern Corridor CRG](#) recently hosted a stand at its local school's Colour Run and Community Day. It was a great opportunity for Ruth, Olivia, and Robert to connect with the Jack's Point and Hanley's Farm communities, promote emergency preparedness, hand out some merch, and chat with people - particularly families - about the importance of having plans and kits.
- **All hands on deck in Kingston** - Kingston CRG has a new [emergency preparedness brochure](#) which has been distributed around the town and online via its [new Facebook page](#). Jenny and the team are also planning a community open day at the golf club (designated Community Emergency Hub) on 17 May.
- **New brochures prompt surge in sign-ups** – With several CRGs rolling out new/updated brochures across their communities - including a massive effort from the [Frankton/Quail Rise CRG](#) to deliver 5,000 across their heavily populated area - we've seen a big spike in sign-ups to [Otago Gets Ready](#). Great work, team!
- **Queenstown Golf Club goes solar** – Queenstown Golf Club on Kelvin Heights Peninsula is now operating largely on solar energy, with the café, kitchen, bar, pro shop and charging stations powered by the sun for most of the day. While reducing costs and environmental impact were key drivers, resilience was also a major factor. As a designated Community Emergency Hub, locals were keen to have the ability to operate independently during an emergency. With the new system - installed by Queenstown Solar - generating more power than it typically uses and storing excess in batteries, the club and CRG can now support the community for several days if cut off, keeping essential services running and providing a place for locals to recharge devices. Partial funding from Community Trust South helped make the battery installation possible.

Don't get in the poo, build an emergency loo

Did you know that after a major earthquake, you shouldn't flush your toilet? Even if the water is running, damaged wastewater pipes could make things messy - literally.



No loo? No worries. Check out this [handy 'no flushing toilet' guide](#). Don't forget:

- ✓ an emergency toilet = bucket + liner + lid + disinfectant
- 🧻 toilet paper
- 🧼 soap or hand sanitiser
- 😬 plan for disposal
- 🏠 a pop-up tent for privacy - don't get caught with your pants down!

As CRGs, you play a key role in helping communities stay safe if water and sewer systems are down - making sure people know what to do and follow good sanitation practices helps prevent illness, protects their dignity, and builds resilience. You can help by running a neighbourhood "build-a-loo" demo, sharing this [great infographic](#) (available in the [CRG Shared Resources Hub](#)) and pointing people to the [Emergency Management Otago website](#) for more tips.

Game on: Household Emergency Plan kicks off

Emergency Management Otago has kicked off a rugby-themed Household Emergency Plan campaign with the Highlanders and Otago Regional Council. It's all about treating emergency preparedness like game day – have a plan, train well, know your role, do the hard yards, and support your teammates. This campaign is a great reminder to make sure everyone in Otago knows what to do and is ready when it counts. Please help us spread the word - keep an eye out for a campaign email and posts on the [EMO Facebook page](#).



News and views

New Defence Force aircraft

Two [new Airbus A321XLRs](#) will join the RNZAF in 2028. More fuel-efficient, longer-range, and able to carry about 120 passengers and 9,100kg of cargo, they'll strengthen NZ's ability to respond to emergencies and other needs.

Crisis Bunker delivers disaster preparedness solutions across NZ

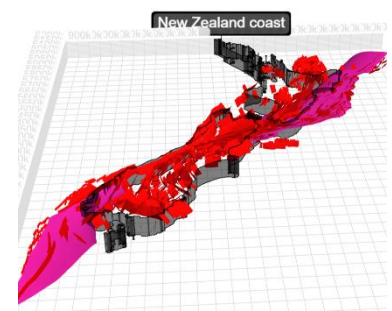
As natural hazards and disasters become more frequent and complex, Bay of Plenty kaupapa Māori business Crisis Bunker is helping people across the motu get ready. As well as providing emergency kits, it has installed 43 resilience hubs nationwide so far, with more than 100 planned in partnership with marae, iwi, community groups, and schools. The hubs are container-based emergency resource centres designed to support families and neighbourhoods for 72+ hours after a disaster. They include shelter, food and water supplies, first aid, power and communications equipment, tools, and sanitation resources to help people respond and recover. [Read more](#).

Policy and planning

The Emergency Management Bill (No. 2) is still progressing through Parliament to update and strengthen the legal framework for emergency response, resilience, and community engagement.

3D faultline view

Explore our country's most significant fault zones through the [newly released Geo3D and the NZ Community Fault Model](#). You can zoom in/out, turn on street view, and peel back the layers. Each fault zone has movement and geometry info - updated for the 2022 National Seismic Hazard Model - so you can get a sense of how tectonic motion builds and impacts the landscape.



Meet Matt Alley - Otago's big kahuna of emergency management



He's the "First Man" to Central Otago Mayor Tamah Alley, but Matt Alley also leads the team that keeps Otago communities prepared for emergencies.

As Group Manager of Emergency Management Otago and an authorised Group Controller for the Otago CDEM Group - a.k.a. the Big Kahuna - Matt has nearly a decade of Civil Defence experience alongside almost 20 years with the Police in a range of roles, including as a detective.

Throughout his career, he's been involved in numerous major emergency responses. His calm, measured, practical approach, and ability to clearly understand and resolve complex situations make him a trusted, experienced leader and a good person to have in the hot seat.

Matt heads a team of 18 spread across the region which coordinates Otago's planning, readiness, response, and recovery. They work closely with national and regional emergency organisations, government departments, local councils, lifeline utilities, welfare agencies, Community Resilience Groups, and other volunteers. Matt also regularly reports to council committees and the national CDEM system, keeping leaders informed and decisions coordinated.

By day, Matt and his team deliver emergency planning, training, advice, public education, and resources to help organisations and communities reduce risks, be ready, respond effectively, and recover quickly.

When disaster strikes, they swing into action to support local Emergency Operations Centres and coordinate the regional response and recovery, activating a regional Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) as needed.

As Group Controller and wearer of the white vest, Matt oversees intelligence and planning, operations, logistics, welfare, public information, and safety. He briefs national agencies and politicians, keeps communities informed, fronts the media, and works to maintain essential services such as power, water, telecommunications, transport, fuel, and food.

When it comes to emergencies, Matt's key focus is on regional consistency, "When we respond together as one team - Otago - we're stronger than the sum of our parts."



Note: The Otago CDEM Group is funded by local councils across the region through rates, with contributions from the Otago Regional Council and each territorial authority. Operationally, it sits within the Otago Regional Council.

Tools and resources

To help groups refer back to previous editions of our CRG newsletters, PDFs have been added to the [CRG Shared Resources Hub](#), our online library of downloadable 'templates' and promotional tools.

That's it for now. Please keep in touch and share your ideas, suggestions and news with us - email Jen Andrews at jen@flyingsquad.nz.